HIGH SCHOOL UNITY GRANTS: CREATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

The City of Tempe in partnership with Tempe Community Council, and the Human Relations Commission has granted funding for school programs that reinforce **anti-violence** and **respect for diversity** among students within the Tempe Union High School District totaling $24,610. The five Tempe High Schools (Desert Vista and Mountain Pointe High Schools are eligible to receive unity grant funds from the City of Phoenix) will implement the following student unity programs in 2003:

McClintock-Unitown, taking place in Prescott, will send 46 students to develop leadership, improve racial understanding, and gender equality and cultural awareness. This is the fifth year McClintock has participated in Unitown. The purpose of the program is to:
*	Develop strong leadership ability
*	Create positive change within their school, families and communities
*	Improve relationships among students, faculty, parents and community members.

Corona del Sol-The third Unitown will be sponsored by sending 80 students to a three-day trip to Prescott. The program activities are developed by the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) with the goal of fighting bias, bigotry and racism. Students will improve self-esteem; leadership skills; and break down barriers of race, religion, color, gender, national origin, ancestry or age. In addition, a mini-workshop will be held for the parents, called Parent Town, of the students attending Aztectown. A student participant from last year writes, "My peers shared their trials and hardships, and I learned from each story...we understood each other's struggles...each other's pain and we understood each other."

Marcos de Niza-Unity Day celebrates diversity on campus by coordinating an "international luncheon," which includes a special guest speaker. This year's theme is "Diversity Inspires Harmony." The students are challenged to address the theme in an essay and poetry contest. Students can participate in a "Unity Council" responsible for planning a short presentation for the all-school assembly to help the theme "come alive."

Compadre-Compadre will be sending 6 students to Anytown/Unitown for the first time this summer in Prescott, Arizona.   The "super-six dreamcatchers" will report back to the campus in the fall and facilitate a half-day seminar for the staff and their peers. Once trained, they hope to begin peer mediation groups and allow student delegates to lead the groups with the help of staff.

Tempe High-Demonstrating Respect for the Norm, a peer mediation and mentoring program will offer activities throughout the year, serving more than 1100 students. Activities include monthly awareness campaigns, retreats, workshops, and activities with other schools including ASU. In a recent survey, the students that participated stated:
*	They increased their community service involvement
*	Became better role models to others
*	Increased their understanding of the causes of violence
*	Increased respect for self/others.

Unity programs like those above truly make a difference in our schools – these programs enhance our children's education and allow them to grow and understand the world we live in. They will be more prepared when encountering diverse situations and individuals when they embark on their life journey after high school. Dr. Jim Buchanan, TUHSD Superintendent, and all of the school principals should be recognized for partnering with the community and going that extra mile to not just teach our children, but to prepare them for the future.

> "Don't allow anybody to pull you so low as to make you hate them. Don't allow anybody to cause you to lose your self-respect to the point that you do not struggle for justice---how ever young you are. You have a responsibility to seek to make your nation a better nation in which to live. You have a responsibility to seek to make life better for everybody. And so you must be involved in the struggle for freedom and justice." – *Martin Luther King Jr.*